

MSCF Minute



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Building with Stronger Blocks

by Terrence Wilcox and the Racial Equity and Diversity Committee

For many of us, the importance and value of equity and diversity in all aspects of institutional life have long been self-evident. We join diversity councils, attend equity and diversity-related events, and integrate these topics into our courses. We believe in promoting equity and diversity because we think it is the right thing to do and we see all of our interests as bound together. For many others of us, though, the phrase “equity and diversity” elicits either anxiety about accidentally violating the social norms of political correctness or resentment over what we perceive to be unnecessary accommodations for specific groups and unfair blame levied toward us for disparate outcomes.

While the latter response is completely understandable, we have reached a point as a union where we must overcome our individual discomfort with difference, and engage in critical introspection. We can no longer choose to ignore equity and diversity or push it off as someone else’s issue. With the pending Friedrich’s case posing a serious threat to the strength of public sector unions nationwide, we must view equity and diversity as a fundamental building block of

a strong organization. Our future as a union depends on our ability to join together and recognize our common interests. Self-interest dictates our robust support for equity and diversity, no matter who we are. If we foster an organizational environment in which faculty of color, LGBT faculty and others feel overlooked, unwelcomed or excluded, then we will all suffer.

The labor movement, broadly, has a long and troubled history when it comes to racial equity. This is why we believe it is incumbent upon MSCF to take steps to overcome that historical record of formal inequity and exclusion.

The tricky thing with equity and diversity today is that it is more often than not the inadvertent subtleties of interaction that create cold or inhospitable climates and blocked opportunities for marginalized groups. It doesn’t take mean people doing mean things. Rather, it simply takes a majority of us to continue to do things in ways that make us most comfortable.

So we, the Racial Equity and Diversity Committee, challenge all of you to take a step outside your comfort

zone and be an advocate for racial equity and diversity, in large and small ways, every opportunity you get, as if our collective future depended on it. It does.

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Other noteworthy links:

[NEA Thought and Action—Fall 2015](#)

[AFT Voices on Campus](#)

The charge of the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF) Racial Equity and Diversity Committee is to strengthen an inclusive and equitable environment within MSCF for members regardless of sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion or ability.

To accomplish this charge, the Committee will:

- Promote equity training opportunities for MSCF members.
- Share resources related to equity and diversity with MSCF members.
- Facilitate a working relationship between MSCF and other relevant organizations around equity and diversity.
- Advise and consult with the MSCF President and Executive Board on issues of equity and diversity.
- Support and advocate for MSCF members on issues of equity and diversity in accordance with MSCF procedures

The overall goal for the MSCF Equity and Diversity committee is to create an environment that allows all people to feel a place of belonging within MSCF.

Please feel free to contact the committee using this [contact form](#) and select “Racial Equity” as the subject.